69.

HABITUAL SHAME.—Why do we feel shame when some virtue or merit is attributed to us which, as the saying goes, "we have not deserved"? Because we appear to have intruded upon a territory to which we do not belong, from which we should be excluded, as from a holy place or holy of holies, which ought not to be trodden by our foot. Through the errors of others we have, nevertheless, penetrated to it, and we are now swayed partly by fear, partly by reverence, partly by surprise; we do not know whether we ought to fly or to enjoy the blissful moment with all its gracious advantages. In all shame there Is a mystery, which seems desecrated or in danger of desecration through us. All *favour* begets shame.—But if it be remembered that we have never really " deserved " anything, this feeling of shame, provided that we surrender ourselves to this point of view In a spirit of Christian contemplation, becomes habitual, because upon such a one God seems continually to be conferring his blessing and his favours. Apart from this Christian interpretation, the state of habitual shame will be possible even to the entirely godless sage, who clings firmly to the basic non-responsibility and non-meritoriousness of all action and being. If he be treated as if he had deserved this or that, he will seem to have won his way Into a higher order of beings, who do actually deserve something, who are free and can really bear the burden of responsibility for their own volition and capacity. Whoever says to him, " You have deserved it," appears to cry